

CASE STUDY: JOHN BALL ZOO

Eliminating Waste, Theft, and Lengthy Inventories with the FOOD-TRAK System



Background

The John Ball Zoological Garden is owned and operated by the County of Kent in Grand Rapids, Michigan and served by The John Ball Zoological Society as a private, non-profit, support organization. The Zoo Society incorporated in 1950 and has been working in partnership with the Zoo since that time. The Society operates the zoo's five foodservice outlets, a gift shop and conducts fund-raising operations. Jodi Franks is the zoo's Food Service Manager and is responsible for the budgeting, purchasing, inventory and hiring for these outlets.

The Catalyst: Lack of Inventory System and Related Controls

John Ball Zoo has been a FOOD-TRAK client since 1993. The zoo's foodservice operation consists of five stands that are spread throughout the facility. According to Ms. Franks, "We initially purchased the FOOD-TRAK System from System Concepts, Inc. (SCI) because we desperately needed an inventory management system for our stands. Before FOOD-TRAK, we had no system, no process and no method to analyze our inventory. We were doing nothing to track our costs. When we did take an inventory, it took 6 to 8 hours."

Features: Inventory Time Cut in Half, Recipe Cost Awareness

Ms. Franks continues, "We take advantage of the features of FOOD-TRAK everywhere we can. It is an extremely user-friendly application and we have not had any trouble using it. Every item that is purchased and used by the foodservice department has been entered into FOOD-TRAK. Our monthly inventory using FOOD-TRAK now takes 2 ½ to 3 hours, which is half as much time. In addition, we have built all of our recipes with FOOD-TRAK, which has enabled us to price out all of our menu items for management reviews."

Results: Theft and Waste Reduction

"FOOD-TRAK has really helped us control waste," Ms. Franks continues, "Before we had the system and started performing monthly inventories with it, we had no idea what we had on hand or which outlet it was in. Therefore, a lot of food went bad for no reason other than lack of information. Using FOOD-TRAK, we have one-third to one-half as much waste as we had previously. In addition, FOOD-TRAK has helped us reduce employee theft. Because many of our outlets aren't supervised directly by a manager on a regular basis, we had a lot of internal theft. Now that we use FOOD-TRAK for our inventory and employees KNOW that we are tracking our inventory, we have reduced theft considerably and saved us a substantial amount of money."

Additional Benefit: Accurate Accounting

"Many of the reports available from FOOD-TRAK have greatly benefited us as well," says Ms. Franks. "We especially rely on the Purchase Recap Reports, which we run and provide to the accounting department. The foodservice numbers that are generated by FOOD-TRAK now match exactly with accounting's figures."

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-Jodi Franks

Food Service Manager, John Ball Zoo

Future: Upcoming Zoo Expansion Needs

The John Ball Zoo is expanding its operations. According to Ms. Franks, "The foodservice department will be included in this expansion with the addition of a new concession outlet and a dine-in restaurant. With additional ground to cover and items to track, the FOOD-TRAK Mobile Partner (FMP) hand-held scanner will be ideal for us. The FMP will save us even more time and eliminate the many mistakes that occur during manual data entry. We are strongly considering purchasing these along with a FOOD-TRAK A/P interface module as our expansion nears completion."

About John Ball Zoo

The mission of the John Ball Zoo is to help all individuals gain information about, respect for, and an understanding of the animal kingdom by providing a quality zoological facility that promotes good animal husbandry, provides diverse educational opportunities, actively participates in local, state and national conservation and research programs and achieves a significant breeding and reproductive record. For more information, please visit www.johnballzoosociety.org



About System Concepts, Inc.

System Concepts, Inc. (SCI) is the developer of the FOOD-TRAK® System and is one of the world's first companies to specialize in the field of food and beverage management automation. The Company provides software and consulting services designed to help all types and sizes of food service operations maximize food and beverage profits. SCI utilizes a project approach, incorporating a diverse set of documented steps and procedures customized for each client to help ensure success. Headquartered in Scottsdale Arizona, the company has more than 10,000 clients in over 18 countries. For more information, visit www.foodtrak.com

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